

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

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O 161144Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6786

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MONROVIA 4808

LIMDIS

FOR ASST. SECRETARY DAVIS, AF, FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, LI

SUBJ: ALLEGATION THAT CIA WAS INVOLVED IN DEATH OF FORMER
FINANCE MINISTER STEPHEN TOLBERT

1. FONMIN DENNIS SUMMONED ME TO HIS OFFICE LATER AFTERNOON
AUGUST 15 IN PRESENCE DCM, ASST. MIN. DUNN AND TWO
STENOGRAPHERS (WHO WERE TAKING NOTES) AND AFTER DISCUSSING SEV-
ERAL OTHER SUBJECTS HANDED ME A LETTER THE TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS:

QTE. MR. AMBASSADOR: I HAVE THE HONOUR TO EXPRESS THE
CONCERN OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA REGARDING
CERTAIN REPORTS IN THE NEWS MEDIA RELATIVE TO THE ALLEGED
INVOLVEMENT OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA IN THE DEATH OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE OF
LIBERIA, THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN ALLEN TOLBERT, YOUNGER
BROTHER OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORTS OVER "FOCUS ON AFRICA," A
PROGRAM OF THE BBC, OF THE EVENING OF JULY 9, 1975, WHICH NEWS
REPORT WAS REPEATED OVER RADIO STATION ELWA ON THE MORNING OF
QTE. JULY 10, 1975, AN INDEPENDENT NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER, "THE
WEST AFRICAN PILOT," CARRIED AN ARTICLE IN WHICH IT WAS
STATED THAT THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OF THE UNITED STATES
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OF AMERICA HAD CARRIED OUT A "BRUTAL ACT" WHICH RESULTED IN THE

DEATH OF THE LATE LIBERIAN FINANCE MINISTER AND THAT THIS ACT
"WAS PLANNED AND EXECUTED BY THE AGENCY'S PEOPLE IN LIBERIA."
HEREUNDER ARE RELEVANT QUOTES FROM THE ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED
IN THE "WEST AFRICAN PILOT" WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 1975, UNDER THE
CAPTION "COMMENT: BEWARE OF DAVIS.":

"... UNFORTUNATELY, CIA ACTIONS ARE NOT LIMITED
TO ONLY GATHERING OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION ABOUT
THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED...
SOMETIMES IT TAKES MUCH MORE VIOLENT AND DANGEROUS
FORMS AS IT WAS IN SOME AFRICAN SISTER COUNTRIES.

START UNDERLINE IT IS APPROPRIATE TO RECALL HERE THAT
IN APRIL 1975 THE WHOLE OF AFRICA WAS SHOCKED BY A
SUDDEN DEATH OF THE THEN LIBERIAN FINANCE MINISTER
MR. STEPHEN TOLBERT, THE BROTHER OF PRESIDENT WILLIAM
TOLBERT OF LIBERIA. AT THAT TIME SOME OBSERVERS
BELIEVED THAT MR. TOLBERT'S DEATH WAS NOT UNCONNECTED
WITH HIS FIRM ANTI-IMPERIALIST STAND AND HIS INTENTIONS
TO LIMIT AN INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN MONOPOLIES,
MOSTLY AMERICAN, IN THE COUNTRY.

NOW, AS THE ROCKEFELLER COMMISSION HAS COMPLETED
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CIA'S ACTIVITIES ABROAD,

QTE. REPORTS COMING HERE FROM THE CIRCLES CLOSE
TO THE COMMISSION HAVE IT THAT THAT BRUTAL
ACT WAS PLANNED AND EXECUTED BY THE AGENCY'S
PEOPLE IN LIBERIA END UNDERLINE ... (EMPHASIS
SUPPLIED).

ON JULY 9, 1975, THE FOLLOWING NEWS ITEM APPEARED ON THE
AFP TELETYPE, WHICH I QUOTE HEREUNDER:

"THE INDEPENDENT WEST AFRICAN PILOT, BLAMING THE
RECENT DEATH OF LIBERIAN FINANCE MINISTER STEPHEN
TOLBERT ON THE CIA AS WELL AS THE RECENT
ANTI-GOVERNMENT PLOT UNCOVERED IN ZAIRE, SAID THAT THERE
WAS NOW 'GROWING AWARENESS ON THE PART OF THE
NIGERIAN PUBLIC OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
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AGENCY'S ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA.'

RADIO STATION ELBC CARRIED A REPORT OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED
IN THE WEST AFRICAN PILOT NEWS STORY AS WELL AS THAT OF THE AFP.
AND, I AM SURE, MR. AMBASSADOR, IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE TO
YOU IF I SAID THAT THIS INFORMATION IS CAUSING GRAVE CONCERN AND
MUCH APPREHENSION AMONG OUR OFFICIALS AND PEOPLE.

RECENTLY, IN THE JULY 18, 1975 EDITION OF A GHANAIA DAILY, "THE PEOPLE'S EVENING NEWS," APPEARED AGAIN AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "HALT THE CIA MENANCE (2)," ATTRIBUTING THE DEATH OF HONOURABLE STEPHEN ALLEN TOLBERT TO THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MONROVIA 4808

LIMDIS

CONSIDERING THE CLOSE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE QTE. REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA IS GREATLY DISTURBED BY THE FACT THAT, IN FACE OF THESE NEWS REPORTS, IN WHICH ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE ATTRIBUTING THE DEATH OF THE LATE FINANCE MINISTER OF LIBERIA, THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN ALLEN TOLBERT, TO AN AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAS ELECTED TO REMAIN ENTIRELY SILENT ON THESE SHOCKING REPORTS. THIS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN AN ATTITUDE OF INDIFFERENCE BORDERING ON CONTEMPT TO A MATTER WHICH, I ASSUME YOU WOULD KNOW, MUST BE OF GRAVE CONCERN TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

PLEASE ACCEPT, MR. AMBASSADOR, THE ASSURANCE OF MY HIGH CONSIDERATION AND ESTEEM. SINCERELY YOURS, C. CECIL DENNIS, JR., MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. UNQTE.

DENNIS ALSO MADE AN ORAL PRESENTATION IN WHICH HE CLAIMED NOT TO BE PASSING JUDGMENT BUT WHICH WAS QUITE ACCUSATORY IN TONE.

2. I BELIEVE YOU ARE AWARE OF BACKGROUND OF STORIES REFERRED TO IN TEXT DENNIS LETTER. HE IS FIRST AND ONLY MEMBER GOL TO RAISE SUBJECT WITH ME. I BELIEVE HIM TO BE ACTING ON HIS OWN WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT OF PRESIDENT TOLBERT. I CAN ONLY ASSUME DENNIS ACTING FOR PERSONAL REASONS IN ATTEMPT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBARRASS ME, THIS EMBASSY AND/OR USG.

3. I HAD HOPED TO SEE PRESIDENT TOLBERT LAST NIGHT AND DISCUSS MATTER WITH HIM INFORMALLY. UNFORTUNATELY, HE DID NOT ATTEND FUNCTION AT WHICH I EXPECTED TO SEE HIM. I DO NOT WISH REQUEST FORMAL CALL LEST MATTER ASSUMES PROPORTIONS OF ANOTHER PERSONAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN DENNIS AND MYSELF. THEREFORE, I PROPOSE USE OUR RELIABLE INFORMAL CHANNELS TO GET WORD TO PRESIDENT OF OUR CONCERN ON THIS MATTER. THIS CAN BE DONE WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

4. IN ADDITION, I REQUEST THAT DEPT AUTHORIZE DCM (WHO WILL BE CHARGE THEN) TO DELIVER LETTER ALONG FOLLOWING LINES TO FONMIN DENNIS PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR LIMA AUGUST 20:

QTE. MR. MINISTER: I HAVE THE HONOR TO REFER TO YOUR LETTER 15833/2-1 WHICH YOU HANDED TO AMBASSADOR MANFULL ON AUGUST 15. YOU WILL RECALL THAT YOUR LETTER QUOTED SEVERAL NEWSPAPER AND RADIO REPORTS ALLEGING INVOLVEMENT OF THE U.S. CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY IN THE DEATH OF FORMER FINANCE MINISTER, THE HONORABLE STEPHEN A. TOLBERT. YOUR LETTER ALSO EXPRESSED THE CONCERN OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA OVER THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAD "ELECTED TO REMAIN ENTIRELY SILENT ON THESE SHOCKING REPORT." YOUR LETTER CHARACTERIZED OUR SILENCE AS AN "ATTITUDE OF INDIFFERENCE BORDERING ON CONTEMPT."

I REGRET THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO INTERPRET OUR SILENCE IN THIS MANNER. MY GOVERNMENT NORMALLY NEITHER RESPONDS TO NOR COMMENTS UPON THE NUMEROUS BASE CANARDS THAT ARE CIRCULATED ABOUT IT BY PARTIES UNKNOWN WHO WISH TO EMBARRASS IT OR CAUSE QTE. DIFFICULTIES FOR IT AMONG ITS FRIENDS. AS REGARDS THE CITED ALLEGATIONS, I CATEGORICALLY DENY THEM AND FURTHER STATE THAT NO ENTITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES WAS IN ANY WAY INVOLVED IN ANY EVENT LEADING TO THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF THE HONORABLE STEPHEN A. TOLBERT. OUR SILENCE ON THE ALLEGATION IS NOT A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE BUT A REFLECTION OF OUR FIRM BELIEF THAT SUCH UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS SHOULD NOT BE DIGNIFIED BY COMMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THE ONLY CONTEMPT WE HOLD REGARDING THESE ALLEGATIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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IS THE THE PARTY OR PARTIES WHO WOULD CIRCULATE SUCH STORIES
AND POSSIBLY CAUSE INJURY TO THE LONG-STANDING AND CLOSE
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES.

PLEASE ACCEPT, MR. MINISTER, THE ASSURANCE OF MY HIGH
CONSIDERATION AND ESTEEM. SINCERELY, MAURICE D. BEAN,
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES UNQTE.

5. REQUEST NIACT IMMEDIATE REPLY.
MANFULL

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